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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 HA-05 SR-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO AMEMBASSY BANGUI
SECSTATE WASHDC 7928

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E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: PINS, CT
SUBJECT: EMPEROR BOKASSA COMMENTS ON AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CHARGES

1. AT AIRPORT ARRIVAL FOR FRANCO-AFRICAN CONFERENCE, EMPEROR BOKASSA RESPONDED TO PRESS QUESTION ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT OF CHILDREN KILLED IN CAE JAILS. BOKASSA'S REPLY TO QUESTION, BROADCAST LIVE FROM AIRPORT LOUNGE, RAMBLED ON FOR SOME 20 MINUTES (DELAYING ARRIVAL

OF OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE), VISIBLY EMBARRASSING RWANDAN HOSTS. SUBSTANCE OF REPLY AMOUNTED TO MUCH LESS THAN FULL DENIAL OF CHARGES. BOKASSA SAID NO SMALL CHILDREN WERE KILLED, THAT THE DEMONSTRATORS AGAINST AUTHORITIES WERE UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, AND THAT AI HAS GRUDGE AGAINST HIM DATING FROM ARREST OF SOUTH AFRICA-BORN BRITISH JOURNALIST THREE YEARS AGO. WHILE BOKASSA NEVER SAID JUST WHAT DID HAPPEN TO THE ARRESTED STUDENTS, HE SEVERAL TIMES CALLED FOR AI TO OFFER PROOF OF CHARGES AGAINST HIS GOVERNMENT.

2. COMMENT: NET EFFECT OF BOKASSA TIRADE WAS TO MAKE HIMSELF SOUND NOT ONLY UNBALANCED BUT ALSO GUILTY, SINCE
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HE TALKED OBSESSIVELY ALL AROUND THE ISSUE AND ADMITTED

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COMPLICITY UP TO A RATHER ADVANCED POINT -- WITHOUT EVER GIVING A COHESIVE ACCOUNT OF WHAT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE.
LESSER

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